



# Turning-Point Questions

**Important Questions That Have Impact  
on the Way We View Our Whole Lives**

*John Sullivan*

# INTRODUCTION



- "Does God love me?"
- "Does God's grace apply to me?"
- "Am I seeking God?"
- "Am I in awe of God?"

There comes a point in our lives when we realize that we need answers to questions like these. They are important questions that have an impact on the way we view our whole lives. Searching them represents a turning point, a fork in the road, an awareness of being stuck in our mindset, and a sense that there needs to be an "*a ha*" moment, a radical shift in our perspective, a change of heart, and a change of mind. It can happen more than once in a variety of contexts and topics – our relationships, our personal well-being, our sense of purpose – but the biggest turning point is in how we think God views us and how we view Him. As A.W. Tozer famously describes it: "*What comes to our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.*" (*The Knowledge of the Holy*, by A.W. Tozer)

This study will address the four turning-point questions listed above. The first two focus primarily on how we think God views us, and the second two are primarily related to how we view God. We will look at Scriptures that clearly show God's view of us and will help us examine our view of Him. These are not the only questions involving our view of God and His view of us, but they are common ones. Hopefully, your study of these questions will not only help you explore these four, but it will also give you a pattern for how you can explore other ones that are similar to them.

Consider the Scriptures on the following pages carefully. The only assumption that is made in this study is that you are willing to seek. You are not being asked to immediately believe what is said in these Scriptures, but you are being asked to be willing to diligently search them. Hopefully the questions and comments in this paper will help you, but the main emphasis is on reading carefully the Scriptures. You will often see the suggestion to read a Scripture repeatedly, meditate on it, pray for insight, and write your thoughts about it in a journal. (You might benefit from having a dedicated journal that you could label "*Turning-Point Questions*" and use in the future as well.) This is not designed to be a fast study. Take some time with it. You owe it to yourself to find out the answer to these turning-point questions.

**NOTE:** Go through the 4 sections of this study at your own pace. One suggestion is to take at least a week for each section. But, other than that, go at a pace that fits you. Also, share your thoughts of this study with a trusted prayer partner, but always focus on discovering what the Bible is saying to you personally.

Before you turn the page, though, and begin reading, answer this question first:

*Are you willing to take the time to search what the Bible says about these questions?*

- If the answer is "no," then come back when you are willing.
- If the answer is "yes," then let's start!

**NOTE:** The discussions in this paper on each of the topics presented here are very brief. The footnotes show some ideas about digging deeper into them. Choosing which path to take at a fork in the path happens quickly, but the choice can lead to a long path. Likewise, a turning point can happen in an instant, but the pursuit of understanding God becomes a life-long adventure.

## TURNING-POINT QUESTION 1:

*"Does God love me?"*



*The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God,  
slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.*

**Exodus 34:6**

The question of whether or not there is even the existence of God is, of course, a huge and important, even life-changing question. But beyond that, the question of what God is like personally can be even more life changing. Is God really the way he is presented in Scriptures like the one quoted above? Speaking to Moses at the time when God's people had just made the golden calf, God described himself there as being compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in love.

You can read that Scripture over and over, but it will not change your life until you know that it is true that God is abounding in love for you personally.<sup>1</sup> But, here's the thing: don't be surprised, embarrassed, or upset if you find yourself being stuck with doubts about God's love for you personally. It seems from all that God has revealed to us in Scripture that he is waiting for you to deal with that question, and he is not shocked, disappointed, disrespected, or frustrated by it. It is a good question – not a bad one. The only way it can go wrong is if you give up on the question too soon without giving it the sincere and serious attention it deserves or if you don't realize the crucial importance of your search.

Like the fork in the road, your answer to this question will determine the path that you will actually pursue for now and, if not changed, the rest of your life. This is not an emotional appeal to try to manipulate you with a "once-in-a-lifetime" deal. Those of us who have discovered the peace of finding out that God truly loves us personally will tell you that God offered us this fork in the road many times. Our experience is that answering it with a "No, I'm not sure He loves me" produced a life of insecurity and a lack of purpose, more of a pity party than anything else. That may sound harsh and may not be your experience, but it was mine (J.S.) Whereas discovering that it is "Yes, it is clear that God loves me" produced a life of peace and grace, grace for ourselves and grace for others. It is not a life of ease and comfort all the time, but a life of assurance that the great God of the Universe loves us and has our best interest in mind.

Regardless of what your answer is at the moment, do you realize the importance of the question: "Does God love me?" \_\_\_\_\_

**Ephesians 3:17b – 18** has an interesting and powerful prayer about this subject:

*And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love,  
may have the power, together with all the Lord's holy people,  
to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ.*

This prayer shows us two things about the question: "Does God love me?"

- 1) It shows God's interest in helping us with it. He had this prayer written in His Bible, showing us how important it is to Him. It is something that He wants for us. He wants us to get it!
- 2) This prayer is asking God to give you the power to grasp the enormity of Christ's love. That shows that the question about God loving us is not meant to be an easy question; you need His power. It also shows that He is willing to grant that power to you. Make sure you get that.

So, pray this prayer for yourself and ask others to pray it for you.

There is a distinguishable turnaround when you start to grasp the enormity of Christ's love for you personally. This is when you get unstuck. It's an exciting time which can truly be called life-changing, a turning point, a radical shift. But it's also a fragile time when Satan pulls out all the stops to try to get you to not believe in God's love.

So, one of the keys to dealing with this important question, and many others, involves listening to the right voices. The negative voices in this world are loud and persistent. You probably will never be able to completely turn them off. But you can make decisions to listen frequently, consistently, and intently to the positive voices. As mentioned in the introduction, one suggestion about the pace of this whole study is to spend a week on each topic. If you do that, one way to focus on this subject this week would be to take the Scriptures listed in the table below on the right side and spend a day meditating on each one, recalling it throughout the day, using your journal to write out the Scripture and your thoughts about it.

<b>Negative Voices (Lies from Satan)</b>	<b>Positive Voices (Truths from God)</b>
"I'm not good enough to be loved by God."	<i>Zephaniah 3:17</i>
"I have sinned too much to be loved by God."	<i>Romans 5:6 – 8</i>
"He didn't answer my prayer."	<i>2 Corinthians 12:7 – 10</i>
"Why did He let bad things happen?"	<i>Hebrews 12:4 – 15</i>

At the same time that you are reading these Scriptures, pray every day the prayer in the Scripture quoted on the previous page, asking God to give you the power to grasp the enormity of his love for you. If at all possible, ask someone else to also pray that prayer for you everyday this week. That prayer is followed by the amazing thought (verses 20 and 21):

*Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine,  
according to his power that is at work within us,  
to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations,  
for ever and ever! Amen.*

Grasping the love of God in a personal and practical way may seem too good to imagine, but God is able to do much more than you imagine. Prayer, though, is one of the keys. As stated in the introduction, you may not even know for sure if you believe the promise that is stated above. Your prayer might sound something like, "God, I'm not even sure if I believe all of this yet, but I am asking you to please give me the power to grasp the enormity of your love." Hopefully, you see that the importance of this question demands your persistence in it and that you deserve to get the answer.

### **Suggestions for Meditation and Journaling**

- (1) Read the prayer Scripture in *Ephesians 3:17b – 18* quoted on the previous page repeatedly; meditate on it; pray for insight; and write your thoughts about it in your journal.
- (2) After you spend a week on these Scriptures and praying, write your thoughts about these questions:
  - Do you think God will give you the power to grasp the enormity of His love for you personally?
  - Are you starting to grasp it?
  - What are you willing to do to listen more consistently to His voice about love?

## TURNING-POINT QUESTION 2:

*"Does God's grace apply to me?"*



### Colossians 1:5b – 6

*The gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world—  
just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it  
and truly understood God's grace.*

God's love is directly related to his grace. This passage describes the "a ha" moment when people start to understand God's grace in a truthful way.

Jim Lefler, in his book on grace, gives a helpful definition of grace and two words that are often connected with grace: mercy and forgiveness.<sup>2</sup> His "simple descriptions," as he calls them are:

- Grace – the favor of God
- Mercy – the compassion to offer relief
- Forgiveness – getting to leave sins behind

The whole Bible consistently shows God's mercy (His compassion to offer relief) and His grace (His favor that He wants to bestow on us) giving us not only forgiveness of our sins (the opportunity to leave them behind us) but also the constant help in our daily lives.



The verse quoted above speaks of the gospel (i.e. the good news) bearing fruit. It's a great analogy to compare it with fruit. You don't see fruit immediately, but when it appears, there is a great moment of discovery. You can't control or manufacture fruit. But you can take care of the plant that does produce it. Doing that requires time and a willingness to care. Likewise, you can't force yourself to understand God's grace in its truth, but you can take care of what you listen to about that grace.

Notice the first thing mentioned about the people addressed in this passage is that they "*heard it*." In other words, they took the time to listen to it. Just as there are many truths about God's grace found in his Word, some of which are surprising and quite different from what the world says about it, there are also many false ideas about grace. Just like the fact that fruit is determined by the nourishment it receives, you also are what you eat. Start your quest with the desire to understand God's grace in its truth and look for the fruit that it bears in your life.

So, the same key to getting the truth about the question in the previous section applies to this one as well: listen to the right voices. As stated before, this study is not demanding that you believe immediately what the Bible says about these questions. But, doesn't it make sense that the only place to really find out what the Bible says about something like grace is the Bible itself?

Here is a short list of powerful Scriptures about grace. As suggested in the previous section, take one of these every day this week and mediate on it, along with the one listed above, and pray for God to help you understand His grace in its truth. Also, as before, ask someone else to pray for you this week to get a truthful answer to the question: "*Does God's grace apply to me?*"

Read each of the following, one per day, and summarize in your journal what God is saying to you about His grace. Meditate on each one and recall it throughout the day.

1) *Romans 3:21 – 26*

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2) *Ephesians 2:1 – 10*

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3) *Hebrews 4:14 – 16*

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4) *I Peter 5:10 – 11*

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Continue to pray every day the prayer from the previous section about grasping the love of God. This week, also add to that the prayer to ask God to help you to truthfully understand His grace for you personally. It would also be great if you could ask someone else to pray that for you as well.

### **Suggestions for Meditation and Journaling**

- (1) Read the Scripture quoted on the previous page repeatedly; meditate on it; pray for insight; and write your thoughts about it in your journal.
- (2) After you spend a week on these Scriptures and praying, write your thoughts about these questions:
  - Do you think you understand God's grace for you in a truthful and personal way?
  - How do you think His grace for you is connected to His love for you?
  - What are you willing to do to better understand God's grace for you?

## TURNING-POINT QUESTION 3:

### "Am I seeking God?"



#### Jeremiah 29:13

*You will seek me and find me  
when you seek me with all your heart.*

The first two questions in this study focused primarily on how we think God views us. The last two focus primarily on how we view Him.

There is a change of heart that comes from deciding to focus on seeking God with all your heart. If what this Scripture says is true, then your sincere search will result in finding God. The search for God does not have to start with faith; faith comes from that search. You can't manufacture faith, but you can control the search. Avoiding both extremes of either being too critical or of not being honest enough, you, and only you, can truthfully answer the question: "Am I seeking God?" Of course, God knows the answer too. But you are the only human who knows the answer accurately.

Let's look at this question from two aspects – the idea of what it means in general to be a seeker and the idea of what it means specifically to seek God.

1. What does it mean in general to seek?

Look at what Jesus said in **Matthew 7:7 – 8**.

*Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find;  
knock and the door will be opened to you.  
For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds;  
and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.*

Here Jesus is talking about seeking in general. It could be seeking for answers or for seeking for anything.

Take a moment to define what it means to actually seek for something.

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Jesus says that the genuine seekers will find what they are seeking for.

2. Now, let's look at what it means to seek God, specifically.

God is not a thing you are looking for. He is not just an answer. This is a personal search for God himself. It is the intimate relationship with him that he is referring to in the Scripture at the top when he says, "you will seek me and find me."

So, take a moment and use the ideas from your general definition of seeking to apply that definition to what it means practically for you to personally ***seek God***.

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Here are some Scriptures to meditate on this week about seeking God. Focus on both the heart and the strategy of seeking God. In other words, why do you want to seek Him, and how do you want to do it. As before, read one every day and summarize in your journal what God is saying to you about seeking Him. Meditate on each one and recall it throughout the day.

1) *Matthew 11:28 – 30* \_\_\_\_\_  
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2) *James 4:8* \_\_\_\_\_  
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3) *Psalms 63:1 – 5* \_\_\_\_\_  
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4) *Acts 17:24 – 28* \_\_\_\_\_  
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Continue to pray that prayer from *Ephesians 3* about grasping the enormity of His love for you personally and the prayer to ask God to help you better understand His grace for you, but also now pray every day about your desire to actively seek God. As before, it would also be great if you could ask someone else to pray this for you.

### **Suggestions for Meditation and Journaling**

- (1) Read the Scriptures quoted on the previous page repeatedly; meditate on them; pray for insight; and write your thoughts about them in your journal.
- (2) After you spend a week on these Scriptures and praying, write your thoughts about these questions:
  - Do you think you are genuinely seeking God?
  - God promises that if you seek Him, you will find Him. (A good verse to memorize is *James 4:8*, referred to above, where it says to draw near to God and He will draw near to you.) He doesn't seem to ask you to believe that promise, but He does seem to ask you to be willing to search. He will do His part; will you do yours?
  - What are you willing to do to seek God?

## TURNING-POINT QUESTION 4:

*"Am I in awe of God?"*



### Proverbs 9:10

*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom,  
and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.*

At first glance, fear and love seem to be opposites. Likewise, fearing God seems to be incompatible with understanding His grace. Also, it seems that fear of God doesn't fit in well with the God who is inviting us to seek a relationship with Him. But when Bible verses such as this one refer to the fear of God, it is not referring to being terrified of Him or living in horror of what He might do to you. Of course, if we know that we have absolutely no intention of doing anything but disobeying him, there is every reason to fear the judgment and punishment that can come. But this fear is referring to the reverential awe of God.<sup>3</sup>

There are many aspects of God that bring us to a point of being in awe of Him. For instance, seeing the beauty, complexity, and enormity of His creation is one of those aspects. We use the word "awesome" a lot in those situations, almost automatically without realizing that we are experiencing a moment of being in awe of the creator of what we are seeing. But seeing God's love and amazing grace is another thing that puts us in awe of Him. Knowing all that we have done, who still loves, forgives, and embraces us the way He does? That puts us in awe of Him, as **Psalms 130:3 – 4** says:

*If you, O LORD, kept a record of sins, O LORD, who could stand?  
But with you there is forgiveness; therefore you are feared.*

Notice that it's not the dread of God's wrath, but awareness of His grace that leads to this particular sense of awe. That's similar to the discussion in *1 John 4:18* about how love delivers us from the fear of punishment. But that same love actually drives us deeper into the reverential awe of God. His love is truly awe-some. We don't want to be delivered from that kind of fear and awe. Think about that.

The proverb quoted above shows the progression of the words: knowledge, *understanding*, *wisdom*. You may know about some things that you don't understand, and understanding does not always produce wisdom. What this verse points out is the cyclical nature of our reverence of God and our understanding of Him. The more we know Him, the more in awe of Him we are. And the more in awe of Him we are, the more we understand Him. They feed each other. The day you decide that you will start every search with a reverent respect of God and His wisdom and power is the moment when you also realize that He will give you wisdom, as promised in **James 1:5**.



*If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God,  
who gives generously to all without finding fault,  
and it will be given to you.*

As implied earlier, trying to find the answer to questions like "Does God love me?" is not disrespectful if it is being asked in a sincere way. That sincerity will produce great results – not just more knowledge about it, but deeper understanding and wisdom to apply to your life. But if you merely ask it as an excuse for not trying to find the answer, then don't expect great results.

Do you have questions besides the ones being discussed in this paper? Are there things in the Bible that you don't understand, or maybe even that you don't agree with? Join the crowd! You're in good company. But start those questions with reverence of God. It's quite possible that He knows something we don't. That reverence (fear) could be the beginning of wisdom for you.

Here are some Scriptures to meditate on about the fear of God. Focus on the glory and majesty of God that leads you to being in awe of Him. As before, read one each day and summarize in your journal what God is saying to you about being in awe of Him. Meditate on each one and recall it throughout the day.

1) *Psalm 68:32 – 35*

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2) *Jeremiah 32:38 – 40*

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3) *Acts 9:31*

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4) *Revelation 15:3 – 4*

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You can see from all of these Scriptures that there is a healthy balance between being aware of the awesomeness of God and being fully convinced of His love. (The statement referred to above about the early church in *Acts 9:31* is a great example of that. They lived in the fear (awe) of God and were encouraged by the Holy Spirit.) That balance is not always easy to achieve, but it's one of the things that makes God unique. There aren't many other, if any, truly powerful beings that you are in love with and that you know really love you. It's hard to love a powerful volcano or feel loved by it. But God is all powerful and all loving. It is that love of our devoted Father that drives out the fear of punishment (again as *1 John 4:18* says), but it is that some love that keeps us in awe of the Almighty God. We can be in awe of God and also in love with Him.

Continue to pray the prayers from the previous sections about grasping God's love, better understanding His grace, and your desire to earnestly seek Him, but now also pray every day about your awe of God. As before, it would also be great to ask someone else to pray this for you.

### **Suggestions for Meditation and Journaling**

- (1) Read the Scriptures quoted on the previous page repeatedly; meditate on them; pray for insight; and write your thoughts about them in your journal.
- (2) After you spend a week on these Scriptures and praying, write your thoughts about these questions:
  - Do you have a reverent respect for God's power, wisdom, and love?
  - What are you willing to do to grow in that reverence?

# CONCLUSION



- "Does God love me?"
- "Does God's grace apply to me?"
- "Am I seeking God?"
- "Am I in awe of God?"

These are all good questions, turning-point questions. They help you think about how God views you and how you view Him. They can help you get unstuck. But they are not the only ones. There are so many more, all related to the true nature of God and who you are because of Him.

- Do you see God as your loving Father and see yourself as one of His dearly loved children who also dearly love Him?
- Do you see God as the devoted Shepherd and see yourself as one of his cared-for sheep?
- Do you see God as your Creator and see yourself as one who is made in His image?
- Do you see God as holy and see yourself as someone that He has made holy?
- Do you see God as your Judge and see yourself as someone who has been judged by Him and found not guilty because of His Son?

As stated in the introduction, hopefully this study has helped you probe the four questions presented here, but hopefully it has also given you the interest to probe other questions like the ones stated above. You can see that knowing who God really is and who we really are because of Him is a life-long journey. It's a quest that will never disappoint you or let you down. As always, if you seek you will find.

May you be blessed in your search for God with the words from **Isaiah 26:3**:

*You will keep in perfect peace,  
those whose minds are steadfast,  
because they trust you.*

If you have not yet found that peace in God, don't give up the search yet. A turning point can happen in an instant, but it might not happen this instant. Keep praying the prayers suggested in this study. On the other hand, if you have found the blessing of peace that comes from seeking God, don't give up the search for other turning points in your life. There will be more, but the promise you can always count on is that if you seek God, you will find Him.<sup>4</sup> You will then find yourself praying these same prayers for others.

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## Footnotes

- <sup>1</sup> For further study on the qualities of God listed in this passage in *Exodus*, and repeated so often in Scripture, see the study "*The Compassionate and Gracious God*" found at [www.d4yp.com](http://www.d4yp.com).
- <sup>2</sup> "*A Complete Guide to Grace*" by Jim Lefler, published by Silverday Press.
- <sup>3</sup> For more study about the fear of God, go to [www.gotquestions.org](http://www.gotquestions.org) and ask: "*What does it mean to have the fear of God?*"
- <sup>4</sup> When we start to understand God's love for us, we then start to shift our focus to how much we love Him and how we want to live a life of love – love for God, love for ourselves, and love for others. See *Matthew 22:34 – 40* and *1 John 4:7 – 21*, for instance.